

WARC

Press Release

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WARC reveals effective Social Strategy trends

Lessons from the Social category of the 2017 WARC Awards

Global, 28 November 2017 – WARC, the global authority on advertising and media effectiveness, has today released this year's Social Strategy Report, an analysis of the shortlisted and winning campaigns in the Effective Social Strategy category of the 2017 WARC Awards, a worldwide search for next-generation marketing effectiveness, to establish current key drivers of social effectiveness.

Lucy Aitken, Case Study Editor, WARC, says: "Increasingly campaigns are becoming social by design and not simply a small part of a broader marketing initiative; and increasingly we're seeing campaigns effectively deploying newer engagement tools on social platforms, which are having a significant impact on brand performance or are actually influencing consumer behaviour.

"By publishing our findings and recommendations in this Social Strategy Report, we hope to bring clarity to the link between social strategies and business results, currently one of the most important issues in marketing and communications."

WARC's Social Strategy Report 2017 highlights the following key learnings:

Become the news: For social campaigns to be successful, they have to compete against the news cycle and other demands on people's attention.

Quinn Kilbury, Senior Brand Director, Heineken USA and chair of the judging panel for the Effective Social Strategy category in this year's WARC Awards, recommends: "You need to become part of your consumers' news feeds. You need to become the news... Your brand, your campaign, need to be useful or it will be ignored."

He added: "Great ideas that can tap into the news cycle don't need big budgets. They just need to be noticed and then the power of social networks can take over."

Prioritise people: Ben Shaw, Head of BBH Live and Jack Colchester, Senior Data Strategist of BBH London, winners of the 2017 Effective Social Strategy Grand Prix – KFC's Dirty Louisiana campaign, recommend that all social strategists "need to prioritise people, their interests, their habits and passions. These insights create great work. Great work is famous work. Famous work makes marketing investment more effective."

They added: "Audience-first insights should inform the creative territory. People's attention is out there, we just need to earn it, not buy it."

Focus more on metrics: Highly recommended is an end to short-term metrics such as view-throughs and impressions.

Jury member Fran Cassidy, Founder of Cassidy Media Partnership, calls for greater objectivity, saying: "It is increasingly important that brands themselves collect their own social effectiveness data and focus more attention on planning and measurement rather than rely on data from the platform owner."

Set clear objectives: Social strategies need more emphasis on what their objective is at the very start. Given that social is now being more closely aligned with sales targets, proper objective-setting is vital to social's evolution.

Fran Cassidy recommends that "Brands should move away from their addiction to metrics based on reach, views and media equivalents, towards metrics that matter, those based on building brand health, relevance and profit."

WARC Datapoints – Social Strategy 2017

- 14% of shortlisted campaigns were seen as long-term
- 29% of shortlisted campaigns have no clear or primary objective for their social campaign
- 40% of shortlisted campaigns used social to successfully build awareness and buzz
- 57% of shortlisted campaigns had a timespan of six months or less
- 57% of shortlisted campaigns were integrated into the broader marketing mix
- Originality is still the most important feature for a successful social campaign
- Video continues to dominate social
- Celebrity involvement continues to rank highly, in particular for social campaigns from Asia and MENA

The Social Strategy Report - Lessons from the social category of the 2017 WARC Awards is now available in full to WARC subscribers on warc.com

The WARC Awards 2018 is now open for entries with submissions being accepted into four categories: Effective Social Strategy – to be chaired by Elizabeth Windram, Director, Brand and Advertising, JetBlue Airways - Effective Content Strategy, Effective Use of Brand Purpose and Effective Innovation.

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WARC hosts four global and two regional case study competitions: WARC Awards, WARC Innovation Awards, WARC Media Awards, The Admap Prize, WARC Prize for Asian Strategy and WARC Prize for MENA Strategy.

Founded in 1985, WARC is privately owned and has offices in the UK, US and Singapore.